

EXHIBIT 3  
DATE 1-31-01  
HB 2

Hello, my name is Lacey Rodriguez and I have a four-year-old daughter named MacKenzie. I am also a full time student. Before, I went onto the TANF system; I worked and went to school full time. I was also a full time mother. I was juggling so many balls in the air that eventually; some of the balls were bound to fall. I started missing work for school or school for work. I could not keep up with it all. One day a friend suggested to me that I might be a better mother and student if I went on TANF and let that supplement my income. Therefore, I did. I thought that this was going to be the answer to my family's problem but it actually seemed to put more stress into my life. I had to work at least 20 hours a week in a wex program, go to school from 8-3, and then be a mother to my daughter. There was no time in my day. Thankfully, I was attending Helena College of Technology so that counted as my 20 hours a week. I had to go see my caseworker every week, which was a hassle to both her and me. There were times that I could not make it or she could not see me. When I took a semester off from school, I found WEEL and had the wonderful opportunity to do my wex placement with the amazing staff there. It was there that I found out about the Parents as Scholars program. I was so excited because I thought of what a great opportunity this was for my daughter and me. I was going back to school in September and could not wait for the PaS program to go into effect so that I would not have to juggle work, school, and home again. I should have known that this program was too good to be true because it was. Not only did the Parents as Scholars not go into effect, but the TANF requirements changed as well. Now you have to work 33 hours a week instead of 20 hours. I go to school from 9 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon. So, now I am expected to go to school 5 hours a day, work about 7 hours a day, and be a mom for the rest of the day. Can I ask you a question? When am I to study, eat, shower, or sleep? TANF can be a good program for those people that are trying to better their lives. The only problem for that is the fact, which you are trying to make it impossible to have a better life...a chance for a higher education, getting off TANF, and being able to provide a good life for your family. In October of last year, I officially removed myself from the TANF program. I was given the choice by my government to quit school and stay on TANF or stay in school and quit TANF. I chose the latter choice. I moved to Billings and am now living with my parents so that I only have to work part time. I attend MSU full time and am a full time mother. It is a shame that my government could not help me when I needed it, but now you have the opportunity to change someone else's life. Please take this chance and make a difference that will be felt not only in my life, but also the live of my family and those like us.